

## WOULD-BE SLEUTHS.

Youths Who Aspire to Be Full-Fledged Detectives.

The Mournful Tale of Joel Radkin—He Came to Chicago, Only to Find That His Genius Wasn't Appreciated There.

There is probably no occupation which for the romantically inclined dime-novel flend possesses such a charm as that of the detective.

To the brave boy with nerve of iron and sagacity unparalleled, who sits on the shady side of a straw-stalk ten hours out of the twenty-four reading tales of "Fang-Tooth Jim the Jumper," "Handsome Harry the Hustler," or "Scar-Faced Scully the Scout," the life of the detective is crammed full and running over with poetry. In fact, his lot is cast but a few miles this side of Paradise.

The idea, says the Chicago News, of being the very brain which dictates the movements of the strong arm of the law is to the heated imaginations of these amateur grangers something sublime. To rectify the wrongs of the innocent and helpless, to pursue to conviction the villainous perpetrator of the deeds



IN HOT PURSUIT.

of darkness, to hound to the gallows foul murderers, is, thinks the heroic embryo, the acme of earthly glory.

Such being the case, it is not strange that so many applications are received by the detective agencies for positions. There are scattered through the country agencies which advertise for men to do detective work in the counties of their residence, and it is this sort of an institution which generally "catches" the grangers. Advertisements are sown broadcast in the country papers, and upon application from an ambitious youth, he is cheerfully accepted. The applicant is at once informed by mail of his appointment as a detective, and requested to advance the sum of five dollars as payment for his star, credentials, etc. This the future Pinkerton is always ready to do, and upon sending in his cash he receives a large glittering tin star, a beautifully worded certificate of appointment, and instructions to lie low and await developments.

The agency, in addition to the above, generally vouchsafes the information that an important case is developing in the new detective's locality which will shortly be placed in his hands. "Only this and nothing more," for no matter how long the young sleuth waits for further instructions, they come not. It is a straight case of "soak," sufficient to cure the detective fever in most cases, and, as a general thing, the victim settles down to farm life and sets up a country grocery, with nothing to remind him of his youthful folly but his fading credentials and rusting star. In some instances, however, the would-be sleuth makes a more systematic effort to reach the much-to-be-desired goal, and makes application in person to the bona-fide agencies in the large cities. Such applications are not of rare occurrence in the agencies of Chicago, and many amusing incidents growing out of them can be told.

The applicants classified as dime-novel readers are almost exclusively fresh from farms or country towns, where the excessive quiet renders a desire for almost any sort of excitement natural. The youths, for they are always young, generally have an exaggerated idea of the important figure they are to cut in their new sphere which makes their ignorance more laughable than it would otherwise appear.

One of the most verdant of these specimens was Mr. Joel Albatross Radkin, Jr., from Switzerland County, Ind., who not long since applied for a position at one of the prominent detective agencies of this city. Joel was a picture, a chromo, a landscape. He was built upon that slim, slender plan, which has been disguised by some inhuman punster as the "rallery of nature," and was about as inartistic a piece of architecture as one would see in a day's journey. An extremely small head, light blue eyes, a long, pointed nose, shaggy straw-colored hair, a wide mouth, a form like a clothes-horse, and Joel Albatross is described. Joel is, in his neighborhood, accounted a literary phenomenon, for not only has he read "heaps and piles" of the Seaside Library and other dark tales, but he has even, wondrous to relate, written several Indian stories and two or three poems, a stanza from one of the latter being hereby published as a proof of the young man's genius:

"Oh, blest be the West, the far away West;  
The land of the sword and gun,  
Where the brave heroes the dark robber mows  
Down, and slays the Indians."

Such talent could not long remain unnoticed, and Joel soon became the sage of his township. But he longed for a more glorious field in which to earn fame and fortune, and determined to seek it in our own windy city. Accordingly he gathered together what firearms he could scrounge up in the neighborhood and landed in Chicago.

He immediately sought out one of the agencies here, and firmly grasping the old army musket which he carried entered the presence of the superintendent.

"I want to be a detective," he calmly announced, a ha-the-villain-still-pursues-her expression stealing over his noble countenance. "I'm from Indiana, and I ain't no slouch of a detective, you bet," continued Joel to the superintendent, who stood aghast, gazing at the apparition. "I've been a modding my career after Deadwood Dick, and am good

enough in detectin' now to commence biz."

"Think so?" inquired the official, regaining his composure. "So you're from Indiana, hey? I would have supposed from your general appearance that you were from New York or London."

"Is that so?" said the delighted heir of the Radkins.

"I thought this here outfit of mine would fetch 'em," he continued to himself. "I ain't no dern fool, and I knowed this here musket and butcher-knife was the proper thing for a detective. Wall, mister, can you give me a case to begin work on immediately to once?"

"Well, don't be so fast. Suppose you give me some of the experience you have had in this work."

"Wall," said Joel, leaning his gun in a corner and sitting down on the superintendent's desk, "I hev had a right smart of experience, I kin tell you. I have run down more villyuns than any other feller in Switzerland County. One time there wuz a feller stealing pap's watermelons an' I determined to run him to the earth. (That's what they say in the story books.) So I disguised myself with a pair of rope whiskers and man's green goggles and went out after dark one night, an' I laid for the villyun. He came, I saw an' he run like thunder. But he dropped a sack in his haste. With a stealthy tread I crept to where it lay, seized it and bore it away in triumph. It had on it Si Bradley's name, and ever afterward I knowed who it was who stole them melons."

"Then one day I captured a feller what stole a buggy whip. I seed him take it, an' it only took me three days to prove it, and get it back. Oh, as I said before, I ain't no slouch."

"Perhaps not," said the superintendent, "but I feel that our agency is not a fit place in which to utilize your remarkable talents. I would suggest that you go back to Indiana armed with firm determination and that musket, and henceforth consecrate your life to the killing of fools. Should that gun chance some day to shoot out of the wrong end, then so much is gained. No, there is no opening for you, except the one which the carpenter, foreseeing your visit, kindly provided. Please take advantage of it as soon as possible; turn the knob to the right."

Joel did so with a dazed and dreamy expression filling every nook and corner of his extensive countenance. As one in a dream he took the first train for Indiana, where he is probably even now engaged in ferreting out deep-laid plots against hen-coops and melon



MR. RADKINS ASKS FOR A JOB.

patches with all the skill ever displayed by a professional from Scotland Yard.

"That fellow," said the official who related the story, "was a fair sample of the granger applicant for positions. They come here in all grades of verandancy and ignorance, eager for excitement and renown, generally leaving about as Mr. Radkin did. It takes a mighty smart man to be a detective, the principal requirements being the ability to keep one's mouth shut. We get most of our men from the ranks of the police force and places of that order. Even with that sort of a man it takes at least a year's training to make a reliable detective, and you can imagine the labor it would require to manufacture a first-class man out of such material as Joel. That sort of fellow may generally rely on being given the key to the street."

## YOUTHFUL DEPRAVITY.

"Papa," he asked, "don't wasps build their nests of mud?"

"They do, my son," said his father.

"Are wasps good for any thing?"

"So far as we know, Willie, they are not."

"Then the mud is wasted, isn't it?"

"I presume it is."

"Then it's just like our Irene, isn't it?"

"How so?"

"Because it's wasp-wasted?"

And the strong man, who had always felt hopes that Willie some time would enter the ministry, went out to the coal-shed and wept.—Chicago Tribune.

## A BRAINY BOY.

Chicago Teacher—Yes, corned beef is one of our most famous exports. Now, who can tell me what stands next to corned beef?

Boston Little Boy (triumphantly)—Cabbage.—American Grocer.

## A CLOSE SHAVE.

"Oh, blest be the West, the far away West;  
The land of the sword and gun,  
Where the brave heroes the dark robber mows  
Down, and slays the Indians."



Father—Didn't I tell you I would whip you if I caught you in the water again?

Son—Yes, sir; and that's the reason I hurried out when I saw you coming.—Puck.

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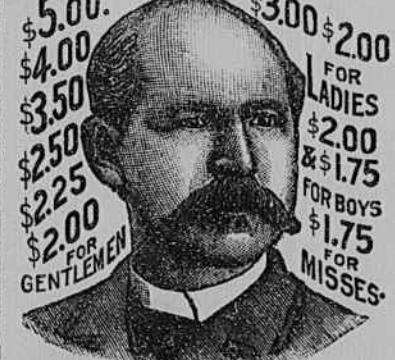
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